

La Vigna

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FALL ISSUE

OCTOBER 1986



photo by Michele Mancuso

UNCLE AL WINS - AGAIN!

On September 12, 1986, at Trenton's State Street Stroll, Uncle Alfonso Bilancio was awarded First Prize for Trenton's finest vegetable garden and its largest tomato by long-time friend and Trenton Mayor Arthur Holland.

Born in Casandrino, Italy, in 1893, Alfonso is the son of Luigi and Maria Rosa Pica Bilancio, and the youngest of their eight children who, from youngest to oldest, were Pasquale, Maria, Angelina, Nicola, Giuseppe, Antonetta, Petruccio and Alfonso.

All were born in Italy; only Maria and Angelina never came to these American shores. Angelina died a young mother, leaving four children who, from oldest to youngest, are Mimi (80 years old with 5 children), Carmelina, Rosenella and Pasqualino - all of whom live in Italy today. Maria's children are, oldest to youngest, Prospero (deceased), Torrenillo, Maria Rosa, Pasquale and Alfonso (deceased).

The gardening competition and awards ceremony is coordinated and sponsored by ISLES, a Trenton-based non-profit organization whose activities also include initiating and maintaining community gardening projects throughout the city, as well as rehabilitating low-cost city housing and making it available to community people. This is the third year in a row that Alfonso has received the First Place prize in the Capital City's Gardening Competition.

As Uncle Al stepped to the stage to receive his award, there were shouts from the crowd of, "Speech! Speech!"

(continued next column)

UNCLE AL...continued

"There's an old saying," Uncle Al began, " 'Where there's a will, there's a way' . My hearing is going, my eyes are going, my health is going, but I'm still here... 94 years old... 'Where there's a will, there's a way'!"

The audience of 100 applauded enthusiastically crying "Bravo!" and "Viv' Alfons'!"

Greeting Uncle Al personally after the speech were his wife, Jennie, and his great-great nephew, Ira Giuseppe Roberts Bilancio - 3 years old - and Ira's parents, Angelica and Francis.



FRANCES AND DAN COHEN VISIT TRENTON

by Lorraine Anthony

Frances D. Cohen (Daughter of the late Antoinette Bilancio DeVito and Tony DeVito) returned to Trenton recently to visit with relatives and friends. Frances also attended her 50 year reunion from Mercer Medical Center School of Nursing. She and her husband, Dan, traveled from Santa Monica, California to attend this reunion.

The two day reunion included a trip to Peddlers Village in Lahask, Pa. and a tour of Mercer Medical Center. The class of 1936 nurses came home to some astounding changes. Frances recalled the old days when the focus was on the patient rather than the machines to which they are attached. "There's less patient care today and more paper work," Frances observed. "It's nice that technology enables nurses to keep closer track of patients' medical status but good nursing requires you to really know your patients."

Frances took time out to visit with her relatives and friends. Rose Bilancio, Jennie and Bob Immording, Lew Bilancio and Bernice Smaller, Uncle Al and Aunt Jennie Bilancio, all enjoyed visiting with Frances and Dan but the visit ended much too soon.

FAMILY MAXIMS

PERSEVERANCE

'U strizzeco fisso fa 'u pertuse a preda selce

The constant drip makes a hole in granite stone.

"Che bella cosa" *

Sixty-three family members and friends attended our family picnic on August 17. It was a big success--plenty of fun, warm companionship and delicious food. As for "o sole mio," the sun was a case of "eat and run"--it stayed through supper and then made a quick exit. What would we do without the covered pavilion?

Uncle Al Bilancio lit the fire, and the festivities began. Afternoon activities included a vigorous game of volleyball (the teams were kept cool by the rain) as well as quoits. We sat down at the picnic tables to eat at about 3 and enjoyed the variety of covered dishes. After supper, it started to rain--we all gathered under the pavilion for shelter and for important announcements of prizes and such.

Corinne Bilancio and Angelica Roberts gave out the following prizes: Bill Appleget (friend of Clara & Dean Acquaviva's) of Florida and Jane (Bilancio) & Dave Darpinian of Atlanta received "came from farthest" prizes. Ray Johnson and Stephen Gervasio came closest to counting the number of beans in the jar. Ray won a jar of lupini and Stephen (5 yrs. old) two toys. The 50-50 grand prize went to Ray Johnson (he was on a lucky streak); the first prize of a bottle of Asti Spumante went to Kim Chianese; the second prize of a bottle of olive oil and package of spaghetti went to Lewis Bilancio. Carrie MacLeod, Christi Gervasio, Celeste Armenti, and Cheri Candelori helped organize the prize-giving. Prizes were donated by La Vigna, Corinne Bilancio, Beatrice Johnson and Sylvia Bilan. Lorraine Anthony and Leo Chianese took charge of selling the 50-50 tickets.

Angelo Chianese announced the youngest picnic attendees, who were: twins Laura and Steyen Garzio (parents-Ralph & Diane Garzio); Andrew Ott (Anna & Joe Ott); and the youngest baby of all was Francesca Garzio (Jodi & Frank Garzio). Babies Beatrice Chianese (Angelo Chianese & Bobbi Wiesner) and Loretta Chianese (Chris & Elaine Chianese) were not present at the picnic, but were given special mention since they attended last year's picnic--although not yet born, they were present with their mothers!

Uncle Al, picnicker emeritus, was the oldest attendee. He was given special prizes of artichoke hearts (for a man with heart) and a box of matches to commemorate his fire-building expertise.

The day drew to a close with Angelo Chianese and Tom Osander playing their guitars and inspiring an impromptu dance of the tarantella.

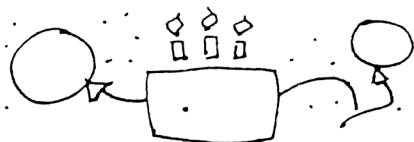
("Che bella cosa" means "what a beautiful thing." They are the opening words of the song "O Sole Mio.")

RESEARCH GRANT AWARDED

The New Jersey Historical Commission has awarded \$750.00 to Francis P. Bilancio to research La Festa della Madonna di Casandrino (popularly known in Trenton as the "Feast of Lights") and to put on record stories of its origins and celebration in Italy and America.

This Festa, dating back to the 15th Century, has been a part of all our families' lives for generations. Anyone having photos, film footage, slides, newspaper articles or memorabilia about this festival, especially from before World War II, is encouraged to call Francis at (609) 392-0982 or to write him at 221 E. State Street, Trenton, N.J. 08608.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



October	2 Lilia Chianese
	3 Katherine Chianese
	10 Ray Armenti
	15 Susan Picascia
	19 Mickey Chianese
	19 Jennie Bilancio
	26 Michael Gervasio
	27 Angelica Roberts
	29 Tim Montague
	29 Christy Gervasio
	30 Bernice Smailer
	31 Rose Bilancio

November	1 Maria Armenti
	6 Dave Darpinian
	13 Beatrice Johnson
	15 Dean Acquaviva
	19 Sue Garzio
	21 Maria Pedata
	22 Ron Armenti
	24 Erma Candelori
	26 Rae Bilancio
	29 Janele Klepczynski
	30 Carrie MacLeod

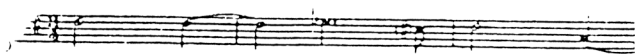
December	5 Corinne Bilancio
	15 Carmen Armenti
	16 Ray Johnson
	16 Beatrice Wiesner-Chianese
	21 Ivan Bilancio
	23 Brian Josephson
	23 Anthony Armenti
	25 Kimberly Chianese
	26 Christine Slanirka
	31 Suzanne Roth

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



October	3 Joe & Pam Chianese
	18 Clothilda & Dean Acquaviva
	20 Anthony & Debra Armenti
	29 Mary Lynn & Dan Nazzaro

November	2 Sandy & Albert Remboske
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STAFF THIS ISSUE

Corinne Bilancio
Lorraine Anthony
Lucy Gervasio
Angelica Roberts
Francis Bilancio
Jennie and Bob Immordino
Angelo Chianese
Clothilda Acquaviva

I really enjoyed seeing everybody at the picnic. My highlights of the day were holding my new little cousin Laura Ashley Garzio and doing the tarantella (our very free interpretation) with Jane Bilancio Darpinian. I consider the rain a blessing in disguise since it made us all stick close together. My hope for next year is that more people get involved in planning the picnic.

Hoping to hear from you for our Christmas issue,

Corinne Bilancio

NEWS FROM 6-DAY-OLD
ROBERT MICHAEL GARCIA

On August 31, 1986, Robert Michael Garcia was born to Roberta Immordino and Daniel Garcia of Palo Alto, California.

Grandparents Jennie and Bob Immordino shared this letter from Robert Michael with us. It was written on the back of a flyer for Grandparents' Day at the Palo Alto Library, featuring "old fashioned magic, fun, songs, and games!" (We've retyped it--his version was nicer with little drawings.)

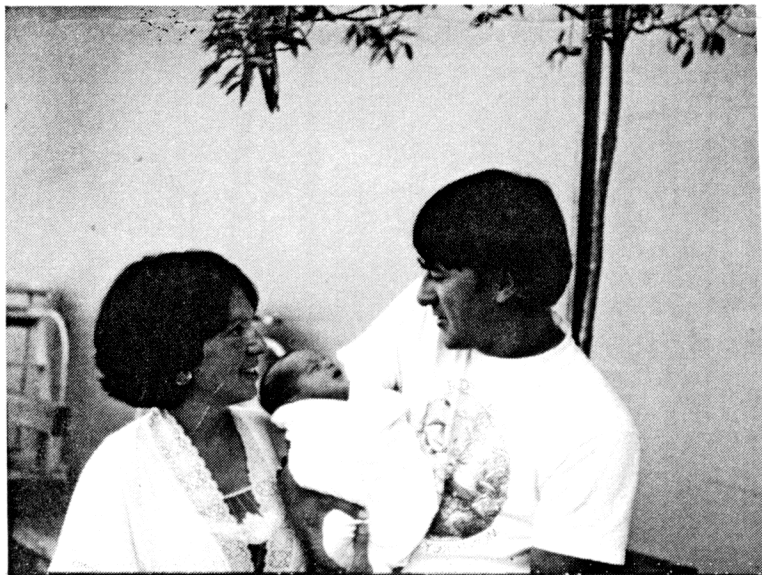
Dear Grandmom and Grandpop:

My Dad took me for a walk last night at 3 am. We went way up to the top of College Ave and then came back down. He named all the streets for me. Amherst, Bowdoin, Cornell, Darmouth, etc. They were in alphabetical order! We were real warm but when we got home our noses were pink. It was so fun. My Mom slept through the whole thing!

My Mom took me to the Library when I was trying to burp. It's only around the corner from our house. I liked it in there so much, I yelped for joy and she told me, "Sssh! Robert! This is a library." Well, how was I supposed to know? I've only been alive for 6 days.

I saw this invitation and wish we could all go together but as always my timing is a little delayed. Let's celebrate anyway. Grandmom, YOU can be the magician when we see each other and Grandpop, YOU can whistle along with my Dad's guitar. Hey! What a good party it will be. I hope my Mom doesn't sleep through it all.

Love,
Robert Michael



THANKS TO POP-POP CHIANESE!!

Julianna Wiesner-Chianese and her sister, Beatrice, would like to take this opportunity to thank their grandfather, Tony, for the rare (these days) gift of having him in their lives every day for the last 7 months. Julianna and Bea, together with their mom, Bobbi and dad, Angelojohn, have been living with Tony since selling their home in Trenton last March. They moved into his hand-built (1956 vintage) home at 82 Morton Avenue at his generous invitation. They immediately filled it up with lots of furniture, several cubic yards of toys, daily cries and laughter from the little ones, a religious devotion to Sesame Street (which Julianna acknowledges for its contribution to her growing grasp of reading and number recognition, as well as to her healthy sense of humor) and those occasional but long-missed marital squabbles!

Tony, for his part, played his role of grandpop exquisitely. No one would ever guess that he's only been a pop-pop for 3 1/2 years, but, given the fact that his children kept him waiting 62 years before beginning his apprenticeship in this field, one must assume that he either gave the role lots of forethought while waiting, or that he has a natural genetic or cultural tendency to excellence. Most likely it is a combination of all three factors. No one loves children quite like a grandparent and we have been blessed to have his unconditional love and support. Thanks, POP-POP!! (Anthony Chianese has another grandchild, Loretta, daughter of Chris and Elaine Chianese, whom he has been getting very fond of lately. Three lovely granddaughters! Some pop-pops have all the luck!!)

The Wiesner-Chianeses will be living at their new home, 55 Green Lane, Ewing (08638) starting in mid-October. They are very happy to have ample space in their pine tree-filled back yard for future picnics (La Vigna or other) and also to have Rose Bilancio as a new neighbor - Eggerts Rd. is 1 1/2 miles away. The new phone number is (609) 530-0632. If you lose the number, Ange's new business number will be (609) 883-TUNE! after Oct. 31st.

ANGELOJOHN CHIANESE

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

LaVigna thanks the following for their contributions:

Bob & Pauline Chianese,
Ray Johnson, who shared his 50-50 prize,
All who bought 50-50 tickets at the LaVigna picnic.

La Cucina

JENNIE IMMORDINO'S ONION PIZZA

1 lb. loaf fresh bread dough
sharp cheddar cheese
4 large onions
Parmesan cheese
olive oil
salt and freshly ground pepper

Spread pizza dough in oiled pan as for tomato pizza. Place thin slices of sharp cheddar cheese on dough.

Slice onions (not quite one-quarter inch thick) and steam until partially cooked. Strain well.

Distribute onions evenly over cheese. Salt and pepper lightly. Grate Parmesan cheese over onions. Drizzle olive oil over pizza (over the onions).

Bake in pre-heated oven 375° for 30 to 40 minutes.

CHRISTMAS ISSUE

La Vigna would like to print your Christmas greetings, stories, reminiscences and recipes for our Christmas issue. Deadline for submitting material is November 23. (The Sunday before Thanksgiving.)

LaVIGNA
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